

# Sports

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

# Diplomacy



## PLAY BALL!

*"Though we do not speak the same language, we are able to communicate through the sport."*

*-Rosa de Rosales, a coach for the Criollitos of Venezuela*

## SLAM DUNK! PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS AFRICA

The Department of State, in partnership with the National Basketball Association (NBA) and its corporate partner Reebok, sponsored basketball clinics for young boys and girls in Nigeria, Senegal and Algeria. Twelve thousand youth received a pair of new basketball shoes donated by Reebok through this program. NBA player Jim Jackson and NBA Legend Sam Perkins, along with Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) players Andrea Stinson, Shameka Christon and Cynthia Cooper, conducted the basketball clinics for youth ages 7-17. While providing an opportunity for the youth to engage in dialogue with American players, these clinics allow young people to discover how success in sports can be a bridge to the development of life skills emphasizing the values of teamwork, respect, and leadership.



Assistant Volleyball coach at Iowa State University and girls from Malaysia



Criollitos and American little leaguers practice on tees at Head Start Clinic

March 6-16, 2006, marked an exchange that brought the Americas together to share a passion for baseball. In partnership with Major League Baseball (MLB), the Bureau of Educational Cultural Affairs (ECA) brought Venezuelan and Nicaraguan Little League players and coaches, both men and women, to the United States to interact with their American counterparts. In Orlando, Florida the participants attended a World Baseball Classic game and Yankees game, met with Florida Little Leaguers, and visited the Astros' Spring Training camp. The exchange participants also visited Washington D.C. for coaching clinics and seminars. They met with President Bush at the White House, where he greeted them and posed for a group photograph. This initiative is part of an ongoing program that in September 2005 brought ten Venezuelan baseball coaches to the United States for a coaching program and in February 2005 sent New York Yankee Bernie Williams to Venezuela and Colombia as a Sports Envoy to lead baseball clinics.

*"Before coming [to Senegal], I thought it would be [the professionals] that would teach and help and nurture and guide, and that we would be a source of light to these young men and women in Africa... But this whole experience, first driving through Senegal and then through South Africa, it has touched me and I am sure it has given me more than I could ever give them."*

*— Jim Jackson, Phoenix Suns, NBA*

The International Sports Initiative Program works at the grass roots level to aid non-elite youth in discovering how success in athletics can translate into the development of life skills and achievement in the classroom.

<http://www.exchanges.state.gov/intlathletics/>